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DE RUEHSN #1089 2622320
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 182320Z SEP 08
FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0078
INFO RUEHZA/WHA CENTRAL AMERICAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUMIAAA/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL PRIORITY
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHMCSUU/DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY 0343
RHMCSUU/FBI WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEABND/DEA HQS WASHDC PRIORITY

UNCLAS SAN SALVADOR 001089

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ES](#) [KCRM](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#)

SUBJECT: EMBASSY SAN SALVADOR CONVENES MERIDA INITIATIVE
WORKING GROUP

¶1. (U) The DCM convened the first mission-wide Merida Initiative Working Group meeting on September 17. The group includes senior-level representatives from the FBI, DOJ, DEA, DHS/ICE, USAID, MILGROUP, ILEA San Salvador, RSO, and PA, as well as the INL Country Director and the INL Regional Gang Advisor. The initial session focused on identifying lead and supporting agencies for each specific program envisioned under Merida, as well as ensuring mission-wide coordination of all Merida activities.

¶2. (U) The San Salvador Merida Working Group reviewed the Congressional 15 percent withholding requirement on INCLE and ESF funds spelled out in Section 1407(b) of the Merida legislation. Participants agreed that the government of El Salvador has made significant progress in the three areas mandated in the Congressional reporting requirement: establishment of a police complaints commission; implementing reforms to improve the capacity and ensure the independence of the judiciary; and investigating and prosecuting members of the federal police and military forces who have been credibly alleged to have committed human rights violations. Mission has forwarded a detailed description of El Salvador's efforts in these areas to INL/LP and WHA/CEN.

¶3. (U) Mission stands ready to put Merida Initiative resources to the best possible use in furtherance of US. and Salvadoran public security objectives. We enjoy outstanding cooperation with Salvadoran law enforcement, and look forward to additional information on when we can expect Merida funding to arrive at post.
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